3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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circle facing south with the pile of buffalo chips a little in front of them, they moved single file clockwise in four circles, to signify that their "scouting" had been successful and stopped just before reaching the pile of chips. Then some outstanding warrior who had made his mark in a particular battle in which no Gros Ventre had been killed walked out to meet the four, and they gave him a report of what they had seen on their scouting. Leaving them standing there, he then went back to the crowd.

Meanwhile the crowd had been singing, a first song when they first sighted the returning scouts, a second when they approached nearer, a third when they were about completing their fourth circle. A fourth and last one was sung as the above outstanding warrior was coming back to them.

At the end of this fourth song, this warrior danced and told four of his war exploits, all four performed in battles in which no Gros Ventre blood had been shed. After this he said to the four scouts: "All right, now tell your story." The four then after walking four times around the pile of chips, gave their report to the crowd: "Over there at such-and-such a spot we found a center pole."

This whole ritual "scouting" for and reporting on the pole followed closely the similar procedure in actual war-time scouting. One difference is that in the latter, scouts returning unsuccessfully would approach in a winding snake fashion instead of in the four circles.[11]

Next came the felling rite. The crowd, on being told the location of the tree selected for the center pole, went thither and the principal vower, his ritual grandfather and the four scouts went with them, the grandfather taking along a filled pipe. When they had all reached the spot, the grandfather made a smudge alongside the tree, smudged the pipe in it, and prayed with the pipe to the Supreme Being. Then each of the four scouts in turn stepped up to the tree and told four of his war exploits performed in engagements in which no Gros Ventre blood had been shed. This made 16 exploits in all. At the end of each of the 16 narratives, the respective narrating scout made a motion toward the tree as if going to chop it down. The narratives over, the four scouts went

[11] For procedure in war scouting, see Flannery, 1953, pp. 90-91.